

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 206322
ORIGIN HEW-06

INFO OCT-01 EA-12 ISO-00 OES-09 (ISO) R

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

UNCLAS STATE 206322

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, SWEL, SN

SUBJECT: DANGEROUS DRUG PRODUCT

1. FDA HAS ENCOUNTERED A DRUG PRODUCT OF SINGAPORE ORIGIN WHICH APPEARS TO BE DANGEROUS. A USER COMPLAINED THAT TOPICAL USE OF THE PRODUCT RESULTED IN NAUSEA, SWEATING, LOSS OF MOTOR RESPONSE, DROWSINESS, DISORIENTATION, RESPIRATORY DEPRESSION AND ATAXIA. THE PRODUCT IS "KOONG YICK HUNG TAR OIL" MANUFACTURED BY KOONG YICK AND CO. (PTE) LTD., NOS. 15-17 SMITH STREET, SINGAPORE. THE PRODUCT IS PACKAGED IN A 3 OZ. GLASS BOTTLE AND THE INGREDIENTS ARE DECLARED TO BE "METHYL PHTHALATE AND METHYL SALICYLATE B.P. 93 PERCENT, BROWNISH RED COLOURING 1 PERCENT, CINNAMON OIL 6 PERCENT". THE LABEL DECLARES NUMEROUS INDICATIONS FOR USE INCLUDING RESPIRATORY OBSTRUCTION, CARDIAC PAIN, RHEUMATISM, BERIBERI, ETC. FOR BOTH CHILDREN AND ADULTS.

2. A PACKAGE INSERT READS IN PART "FOR THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS TAKE ORALLY AND APPLY LOCALLY. IT CAN BE USED
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FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN. CAUTION, DO NOT TAKE EXCESSIVE AMOUNTS". PRODUCT CONTAINS NO ADDITIONAL DIRECTIONS FOR USE OR DOSAGE. SINCE LABORATORY ANALYSIS BY FDA SHOWED

PRODUCT TO BE 100 PERCENT METHYL SALICYLATE INGESTION OF RELATIVELY SMALL AMOUNTS COULD CAUSE POISONING. MERCK INDEX GIVES THE AVERAGE LETHAL DOSE AS 10 ML IN CHILDREN

AND 30 ML IN ADULTS.

3. FDA HAS TRACED THE PRODUCT TO KWANG SANG FUNG CO.,
SAN FRANCISCO. THIS FIRM CLAIMS TO HAVE RECEIVED 18
BOTTLES FROM VARIOUS SEAMEN WHO BROUGHT IT INTO THE COUNTRY
IN PERSONAL BAGGAGE.

4. FDA SUGGESTS THAT THIS INFORMATION BE FORWARDED TO THE
SINGAPORE HEALTH AUTHORITIES FOR WHATEVER ACTION THEY MAY
CONSIDER NECESSARY. FDA REQUESTS THAT IF SINGAPORE
AUTHORITIES FIND ANY INFORMATION ON DIRECT EXPORTATION OF
THIS PRODUCT TO U.S. THAT THIS INFORMATION BE REFERRED
TO FDA.

5. FDA DRUG REGULATIONS NOTE THAT CHILDREN PARTICULARLY
ARE ATTRACTED BY THE ODOR OF METHYL SALICYLATE (ALSO
KNOWN AS WINTERGREEN OIL) AND ARE LIKELY TO SWALLOW
PRODUCTS CONTAINING IT. AS A RESULT SUCH PRODUCTS HAVE
CAUSED A NUMBER OF DEATHS THROUGH ACCIDENTAL OVERUSE BY
BOTH ADULTS AND CHILDREN. FDA REGULATIONS REQUIRE THAT
ANY DRUG PRODUCT CONTAINING MORE THAN 5 PERCENT METHYL
SALICYLATE CARRY A LABEL WARNING THAT USE OTHERWISE THAN
DIRECTED MAY BE DANGEROUS AND THAT THE PRODUCT SHOULD BE
KEPT OUT OF THE REACH OF CHILDREN TO PREVENT ACCIDENTAL
POISONING. VANCE

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